

# ABSOLUTE BATMAN



**ALL IN**

13+  
TEEN

3

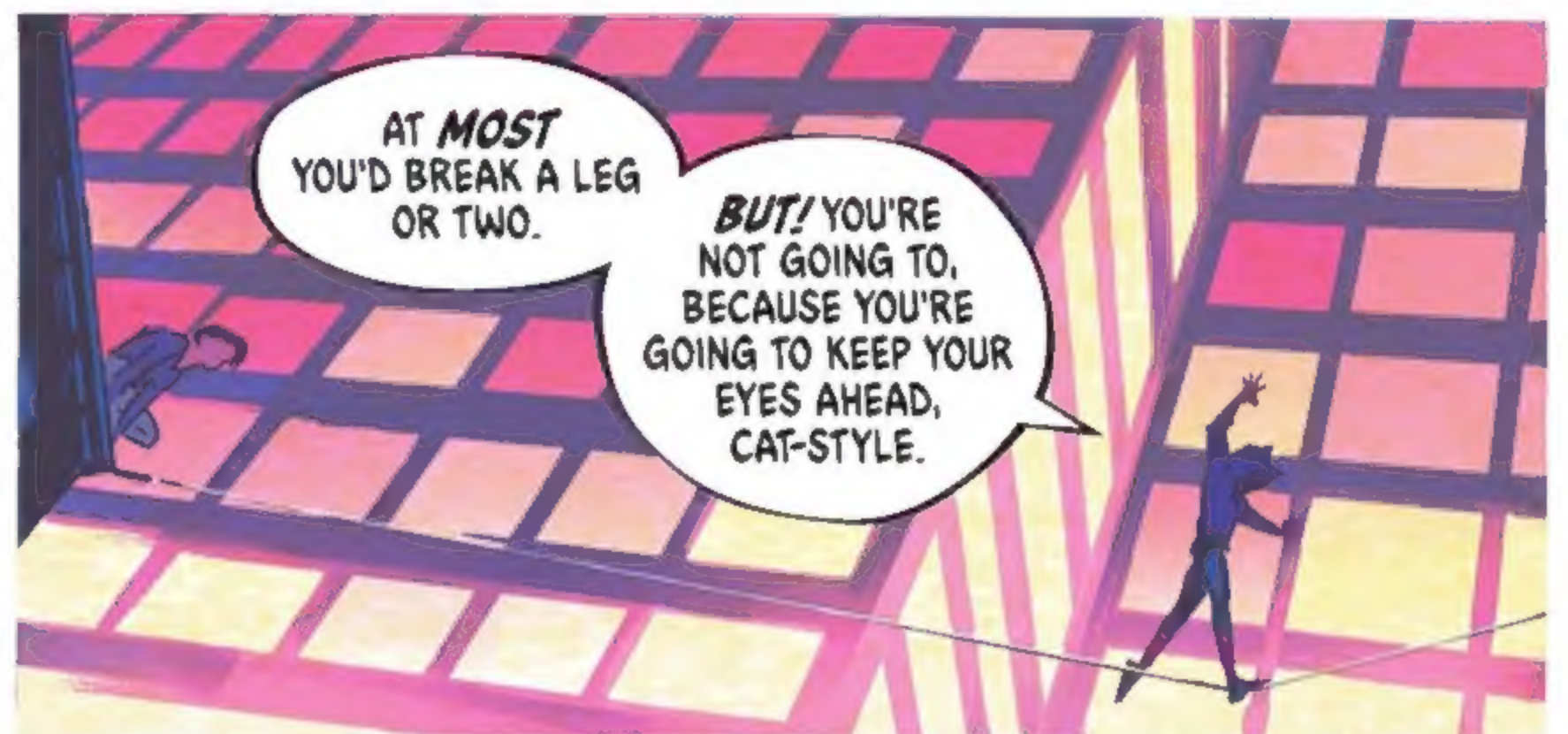


SNYDER  
DRAGOTTA  
MARTIN

DRAGOTTA

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**ABSOLUTE  
BATMAN**

# "THE ZOO"

**PART THREE**

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EDITOR: KATIE KUBERT • EXECUTIVE EDITOR: CHRIS CONROY • BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE WITH BILL FINGER**





I've spent more than four decades cultivating a life of stealth.



WHAT THE...



I have over twenty passports, twice as many identities.

I pride myself on being no one. The vague shape of a man sitting across from you on the train. An outline, a charcoal sketch.

Forty years of creating a life in the shadows...

...all to find myself driving down Broadway on the hood of a giant, bat-themed dump truck. And it suddenly occurs to me...

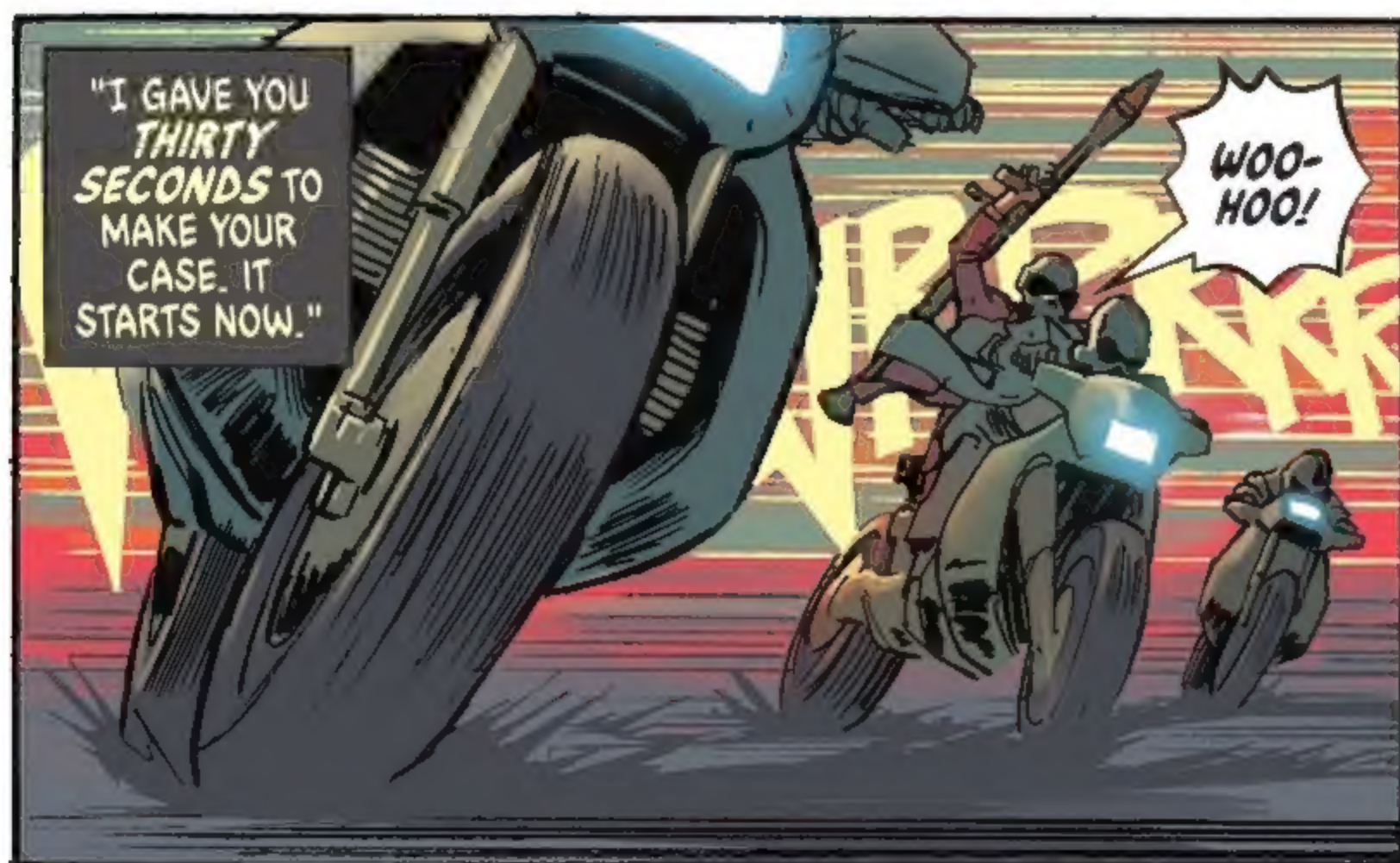


...I may actually hate Batman.

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?! YOU CAN'T JUST PLOW STRAIGHT THROUGH THE CITY! THEY'LL OVERTAKE US IN NO TIME!



THEN YOU BETTER TALK FAST.



"I GAVE YOU THIRTY SECONDS TO MAKE YOUR CASE. IT STARTS NOW."

WOO-HOO!



IN MY FIELD, THERE ARE RUMORS OF A MAN CALLED THE **BLACK MASK!**





TORCH THEM!

TA TA TA  
TA TA TA  
TA TA TA

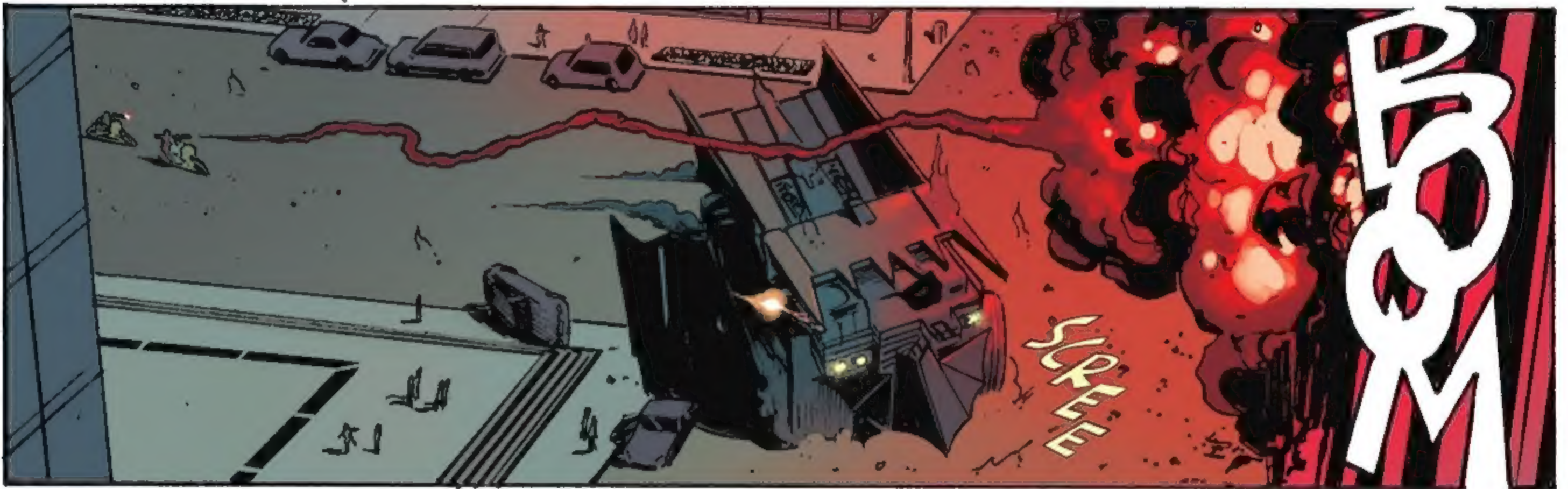


HE'S THE LEADER OF A SECRET PARAMILITARY GROUP THAT SERVES SOME OF THE MOST POWERFUL PEOPLE ON THE PLANET. DESTABILIZING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, VIOLENT DISRUPTION...

...I BELIEVE THAT **ROMAN SIONIS**, THE LEADER OF THE PARTY ANIMALS, MAY BE THE BLACK MASK!

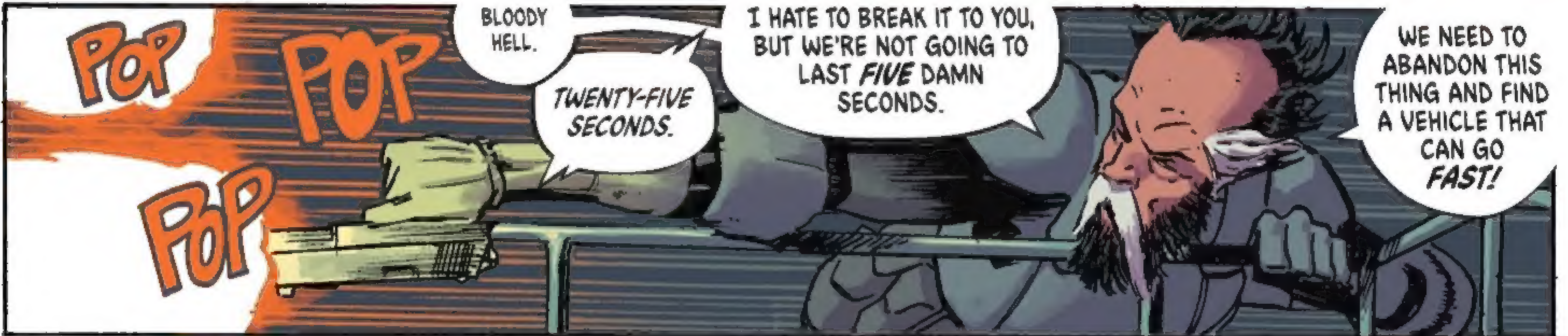


THOOM



BOOM

SURF



POP  
POP  
POP

BLOODY HELL.

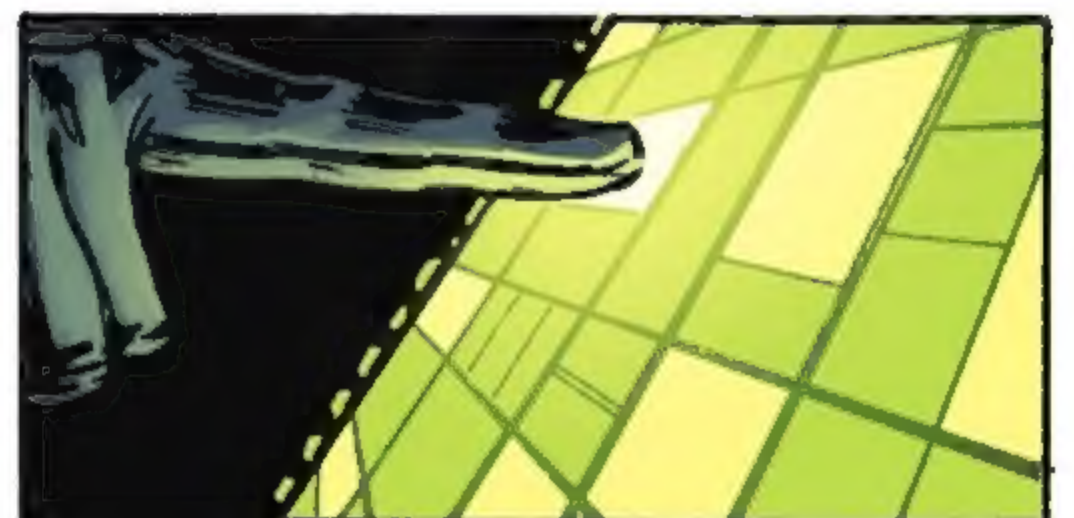
TWENTY-FIVE SECONDS.

I HATE TO BREAK IT TO YOU, BUT WE'RE NOT GOING TO LAST **FIVE DAMN SECONDS**.

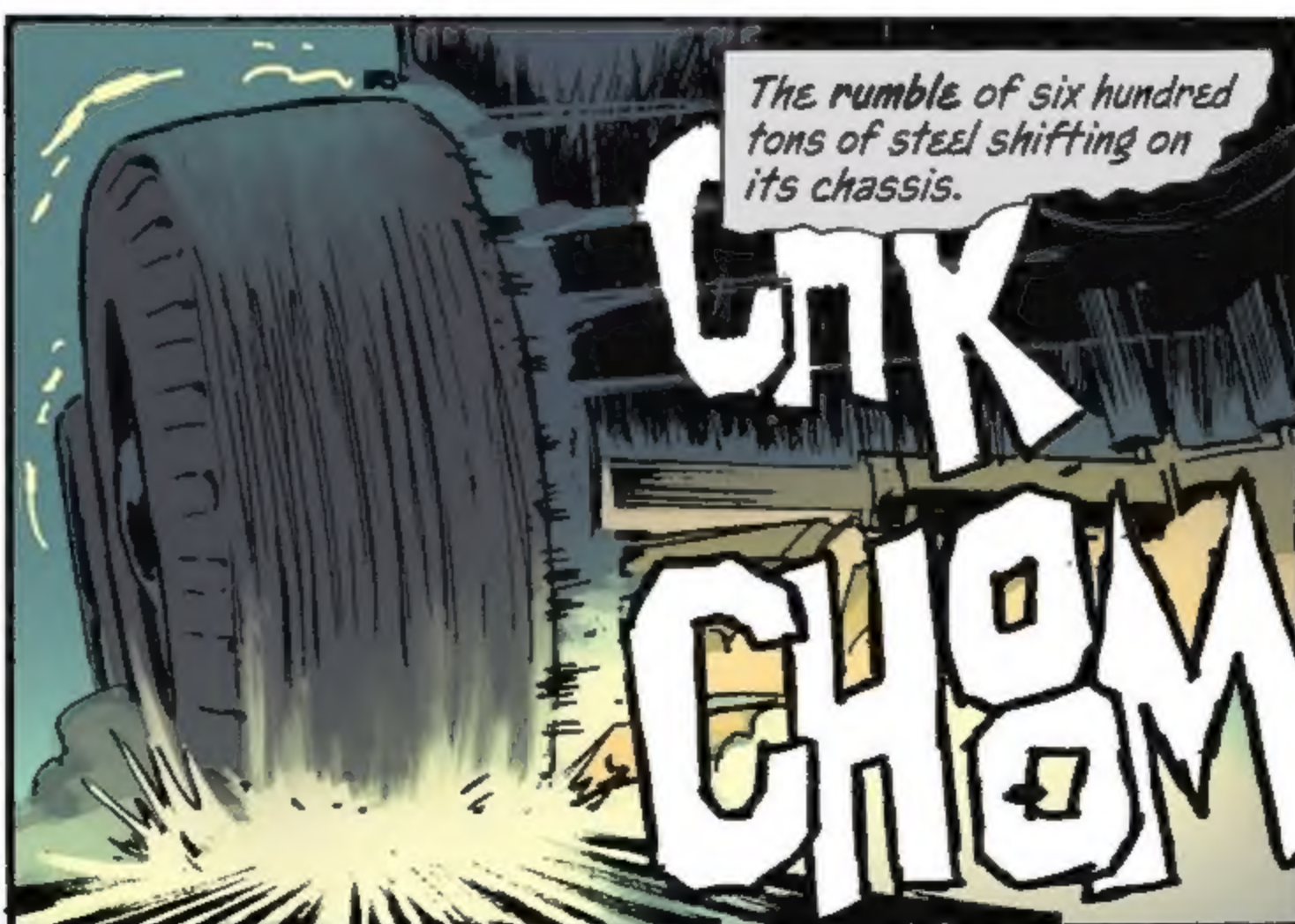
WE NEED TO ABANDON THIS THING AND FIND A VEHICLE THAT CAN GO **FAST!**



I'LL PRETEND YOU DIDN'T SAY THAT.



There's a sudden screech of hydraulics.



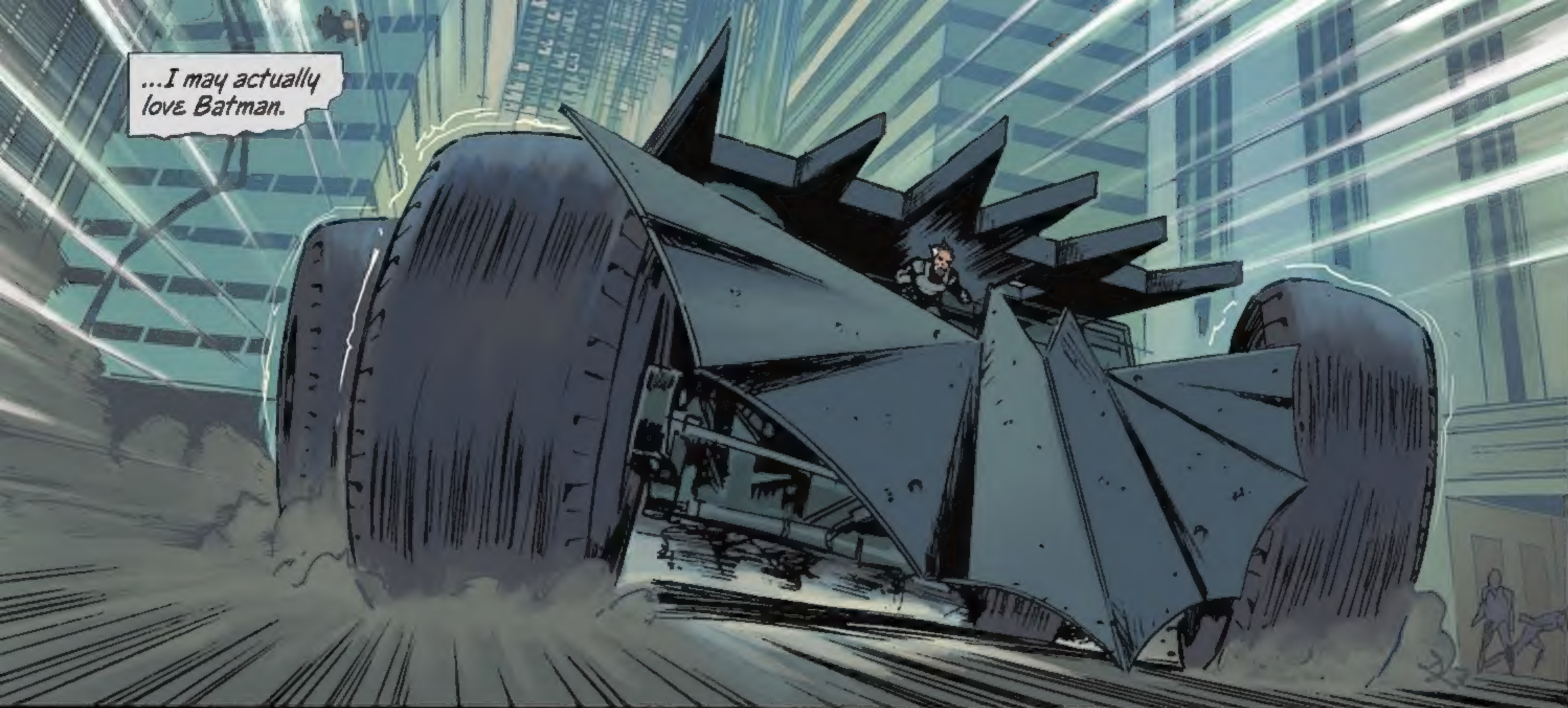
The rumble of six hundred tons of steel shifting on its chassis.

CHOM



The roof almost takes off my head, but all I can think is...





...I may actually love Batman.



YOU HAVE TWENTY SECONDS.

IF YOU MANAGE TO HOLD ON.



The sweet smell of kerosene burns my nose as we rocket forward. Homemade jet engines. Ever the builder, this one.

LISTEN TO ME, DAMMIT!



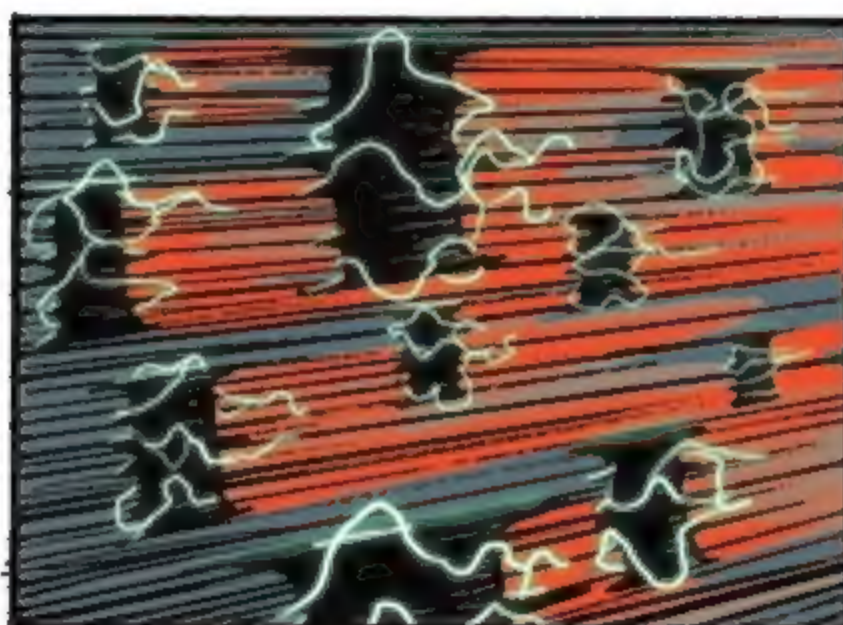
I CAN HELP YOU!



SO CLOSE THE HATCH AND PROVE IT.

FIFTEEN SECONDS.







BUT HE OFFERED YOU A **DEAL** BACK THERE. I **HEARD** HIM! THAT MEANS HE'S READY TO **COMPROMISE**.

MY GUESS IS, WHATEVER HE HAS BEEN TRYING TO ACHIEVE WITH THESE ATTACKS ON GOTHAM, IT'S ALMOST DONE.

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?



I'M SAYING YOU **MEET HIM**, AGREE TO STEP DOWN YOUR FIGHT. I'LL BET HE'LL LOWER THE ATTACKS ON GOTHAM TO ALMOST NOTHING. MAYBE EVEN STOP THEM. YOU GET TO BE THE HERO.

BY QUITTING?

FORGET IT.

"BY SAVING LIVES THROUGH DIPLOMACY. BY BEING A #\$\$%& GROWN UP! AND IF THAT'S NOT ENOUGH..."

"...BLACK MASK SERVES SOME OF THE RICHEST GLOBAL PLUTOCRATS. THIS OFFER, IT'S PROBABLY FOR A HUNDRED MILLION, MORE..."

"YOU TAKE IT, YOU CAN SET BATMAN UP AS SOMETHING **REAL** HERE.

"SOMETHING WITH **IMPACT**."

AND WHAT'S IN THIS FOR YOU?

"FOR SIONIS TO MAKE THE DEAL, HE'LL NEED TO MAKE TRANSACTIONS THAT WILL LIKELY GIVE MY PEOPLE ALL THEY NEED ON HIM.

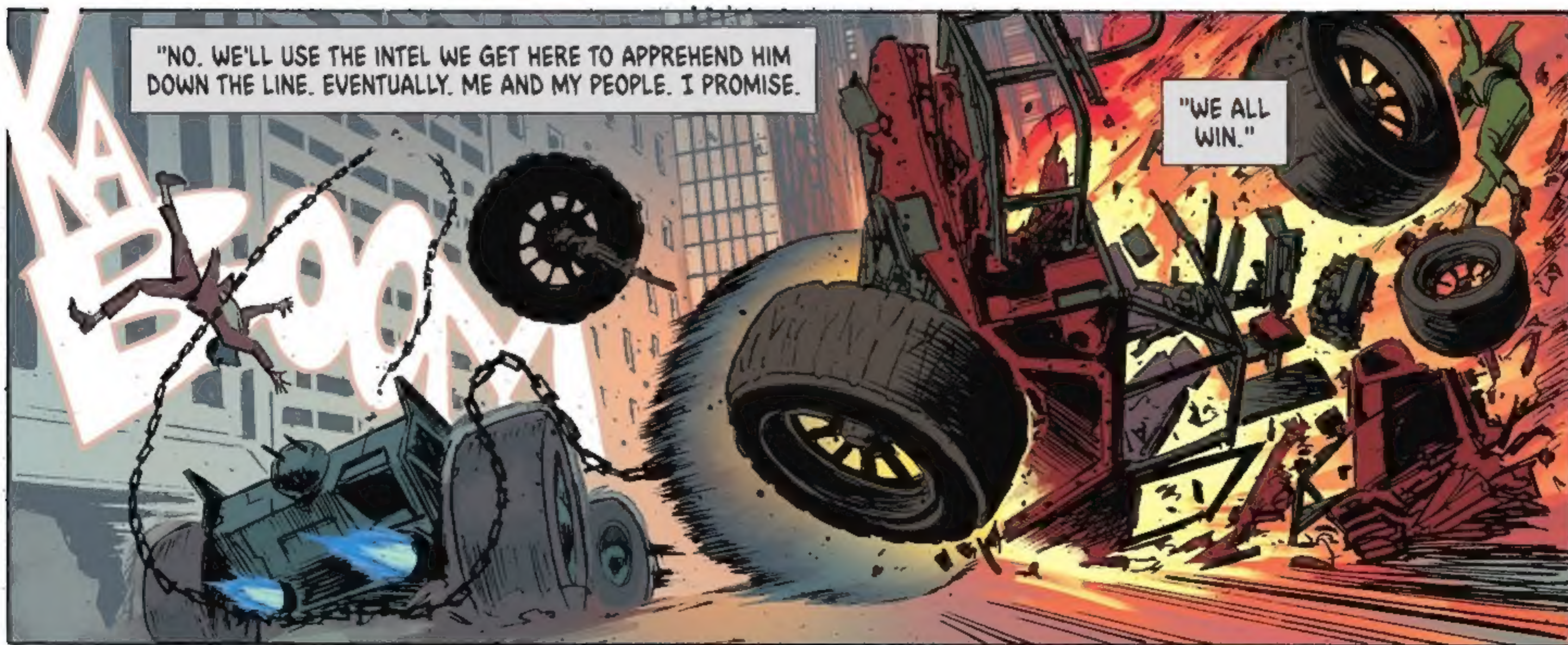
"SO **ME?** I GET TO LEAVE THIS CITY. AND **YOU** GET TO BUILD BATMAN BIG.

"**REALLY** BIG."

AND SIONIS JUST **GETS AWAY?**

"NO. WE'LL USE THE INTEL WE GET HERE TO APPREHEND HIM DOWN THE LINE. EVENTUALLY. ME AND MY PEOPLE. I PROMISE.

"WE ALL WIN."







Behind us, the sirens grow loud.

But I note that he has stopped his blasted countdown. He's hearing me, finally. He's listening, thank God.



THIS IS COMMISSIONER HARVEY BULLOCK! YOU WILL EXIT THE VEHICLE NOW!



YOU AND WHOEVER ELSE YOU GOT IN THERE! YOU HEAR ME?!



THERE'S NOWHERE LEFT TO GO. IT'S OVER!



WE MAKE A DECENT TEAM, KID. TELL ME YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO GET US OUT OF THIS ONE AND LET'S KEEP IT GOING.

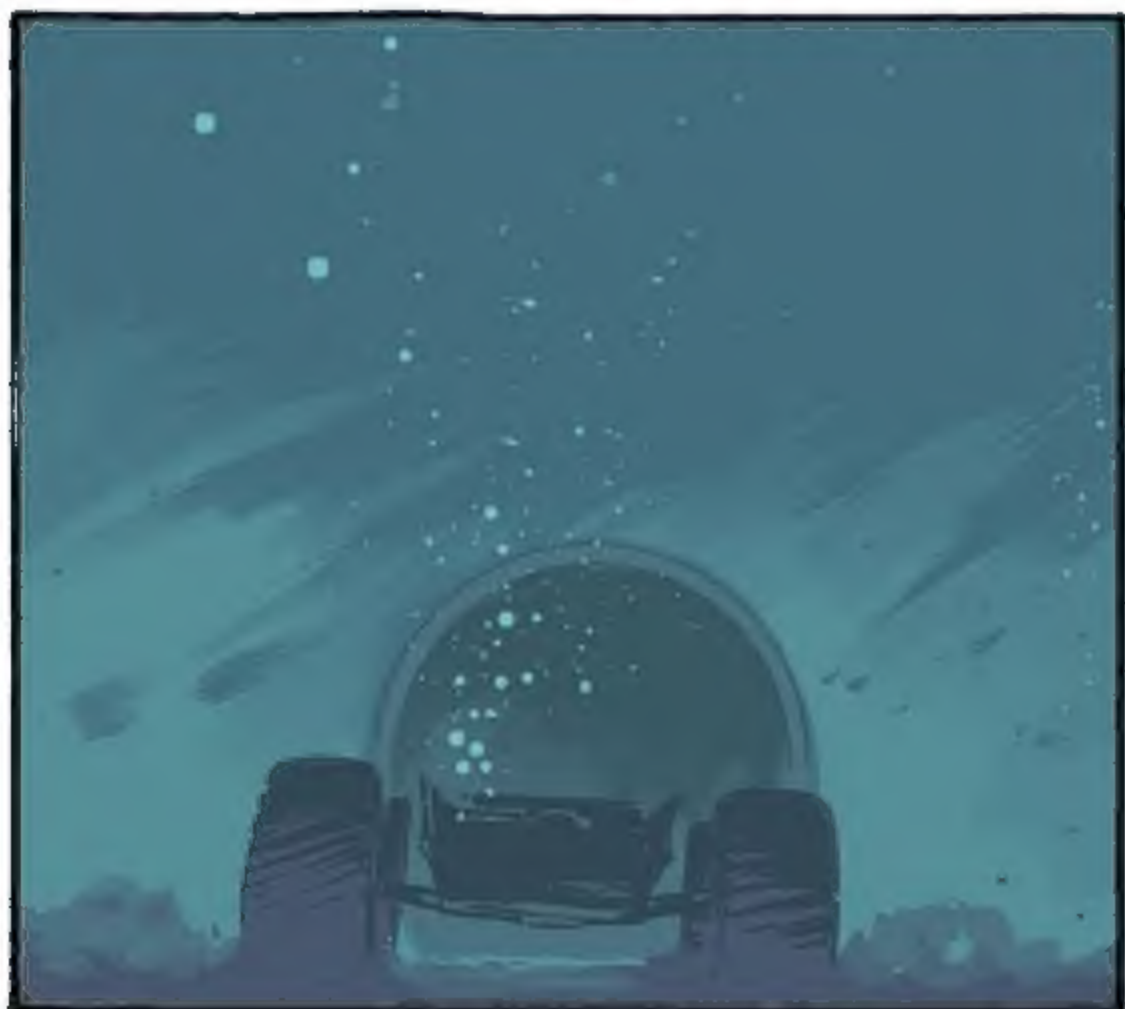
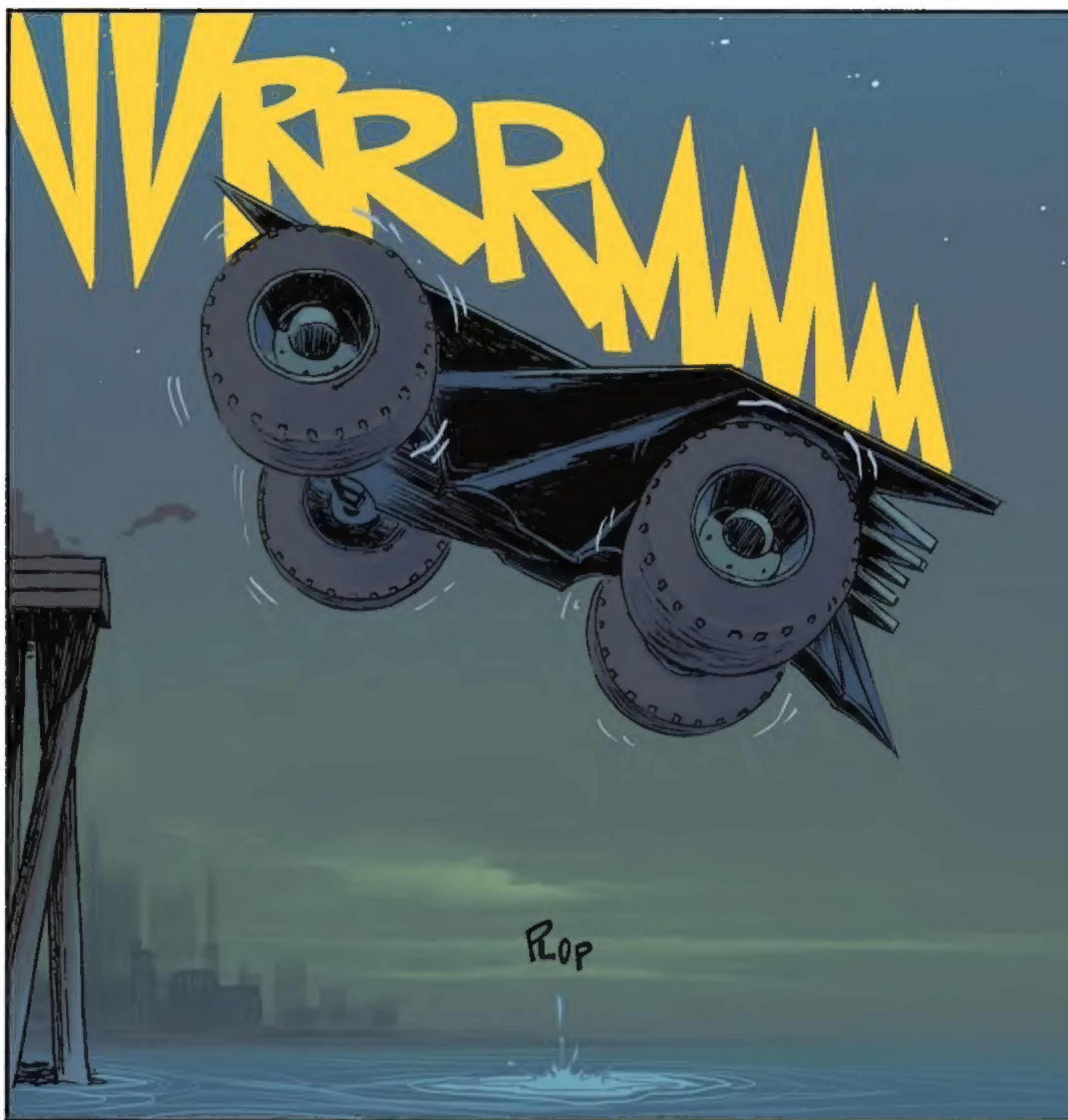


THE LEVER IN FRONT OF YOU.



ALL RIGHT TH--





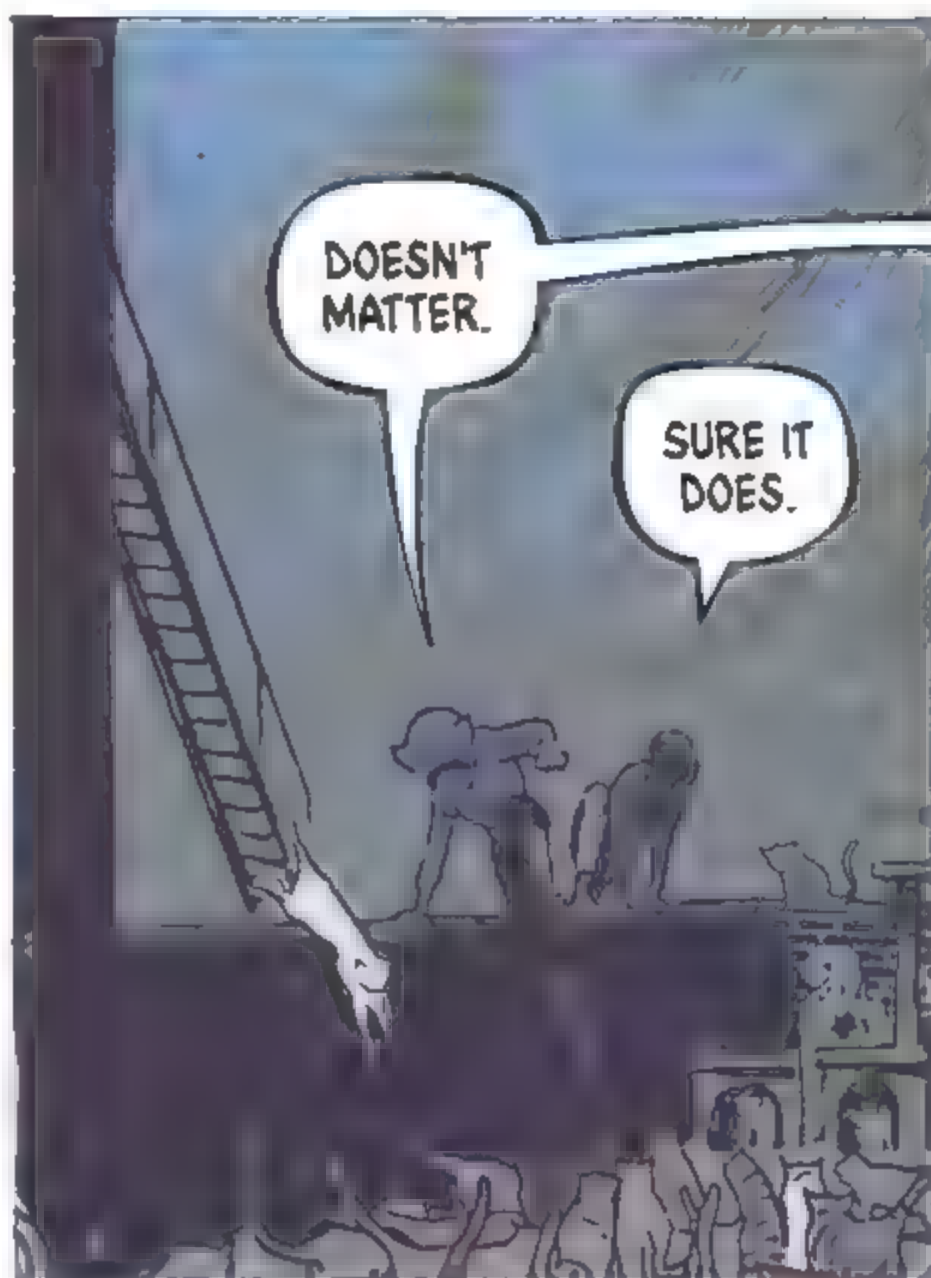




...HOW IS IT?

NOT THERE ANYMORE.

WHY? WHAT HAPPENED?



DOESN'T MATTER.

SURE IT DOES.

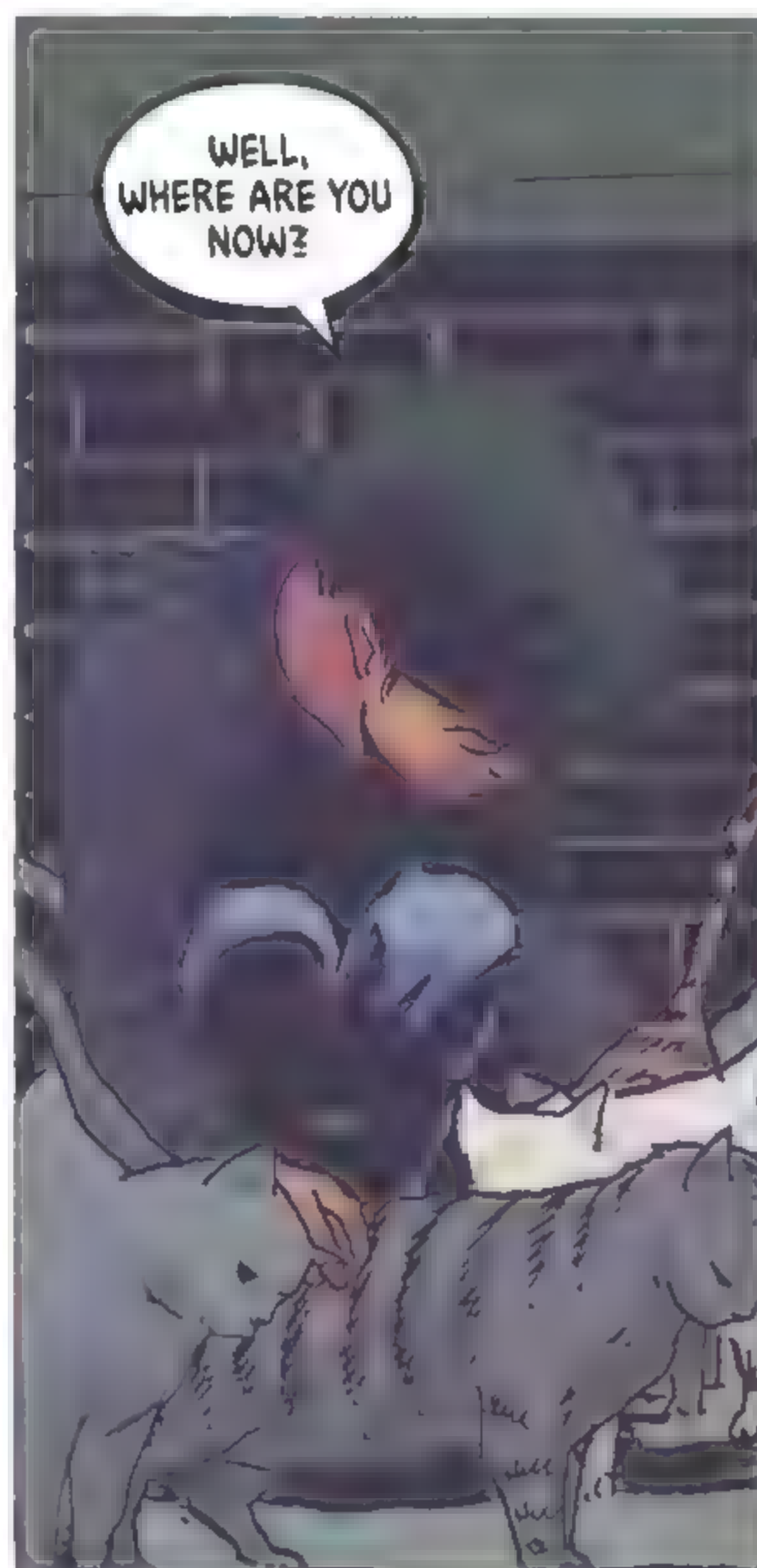


*\*SIGH\** LOOK, SOME PEOPLE LIKE THE **IDEA** OF A FOSTER KID, BUT NOT THE REAL THING. THAT'S IN A GOOD CASE. THIS... WAS A BAD CASE.



MAN, WHAT IS THAT, THREE HOMES IN THE LAST YEAR?

FOUR. BUT WHO'S COUNTING?

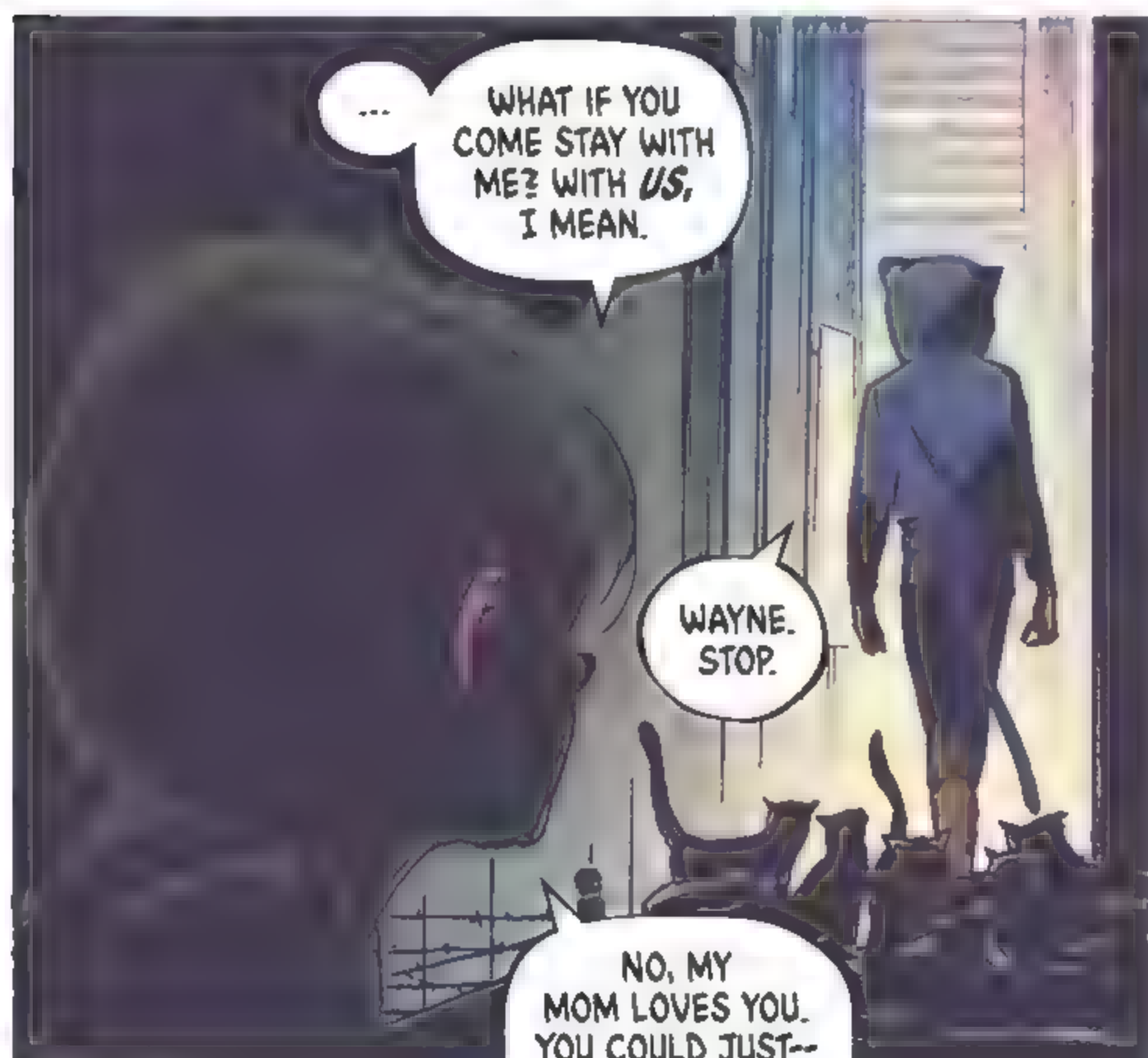


WELL, WHERE ARE YOU NOW?



I'M HERE, WITH YOU.

AND THEM. SEE, THAT'S THE THING, WAYNE. WHATEVER'S HAPPENING, I COME UP HERE AND **THESE GUYS**...THEY ALWAYS SHOW UP. PURRING, TOO.



... WHAT IF YOU COME STAY WITH ME? WITH **US**, I MEAN.

WAYNE. STOP.

NO, MY MOM LOVES YOU. YOU COULD JUST--



**NO.** I SAID NO, OKAY?

LET'S TALK ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE. SOMETHING... HAPPY.









...ASK  
AWAY,  
BRUCE!

I CAME TO  
TALK TO *YOU*,  
MAN.



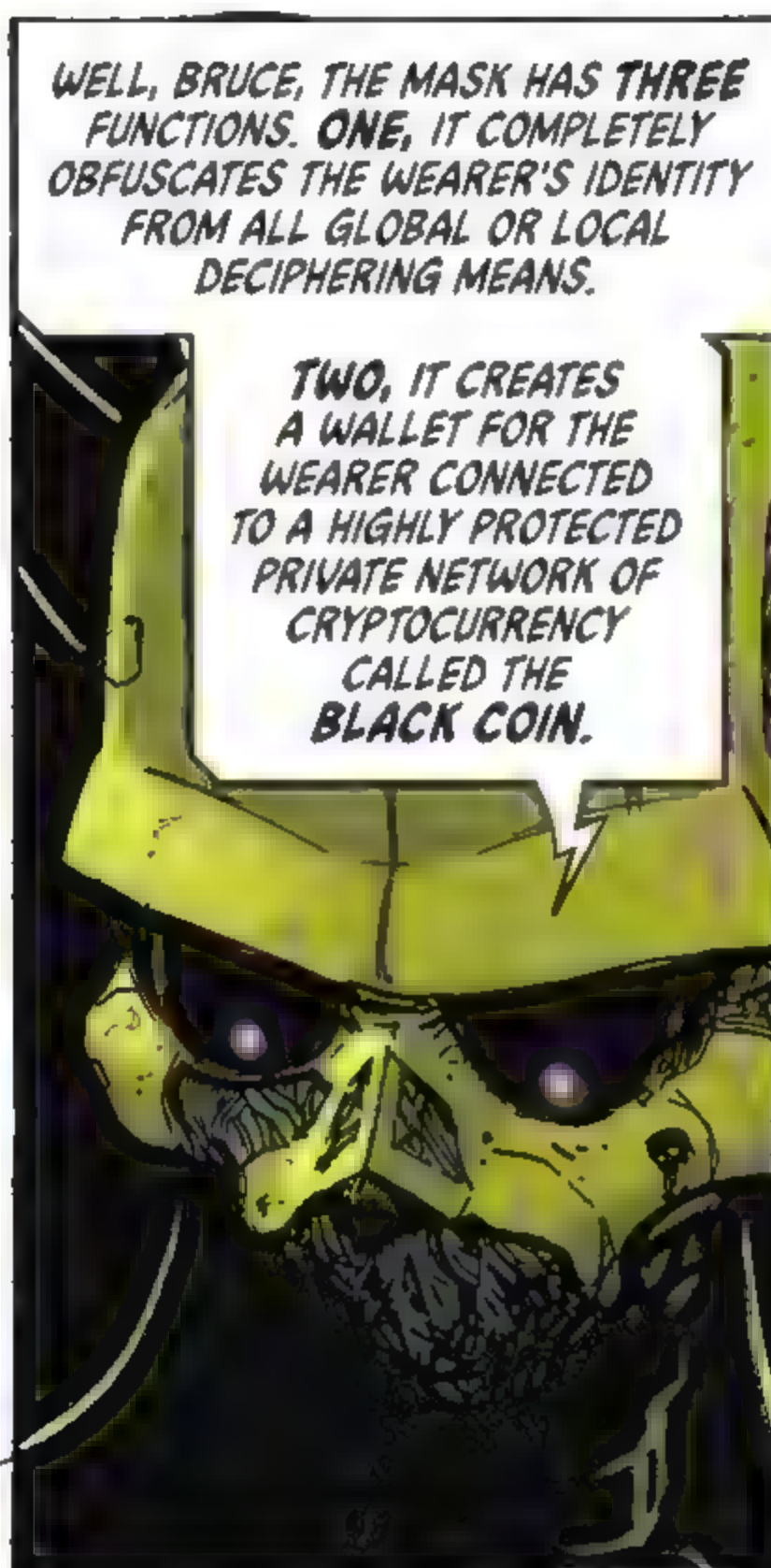
AH, BUT  
HE *IS* ME. AND  
YOU. AND EVERYONE  
HE CONTAINS ABOUT  
FOUR-FIFTHS OF ALL  
HUMAN KNOWLEDGE  
AND COUNTING...  
SO GO ON!

DOES  
HE HAVE A  
*NAME*?

I WAS THINKING  
"AL," AFTER ALAN TURING,  
THE LIBRARY OF ALEXANDRIA, AND  
AS A VISUAL PLAY ON A.I., OF COURSE.  
BUT NOW I'M JUST THINKING  
SOMETHING WITH RIDDLES?  
RIDDLE-MAN? BECAUSE THE  
GREAT RIDDLE OF HUMANITY IS  
HOW TO LIVE FOREVER, AM  
I RIGHT? AND WE ALL EXIST  
INSIDE THIS DUDE. BUT  
I DIGRESS. GO,  
GO, GO.

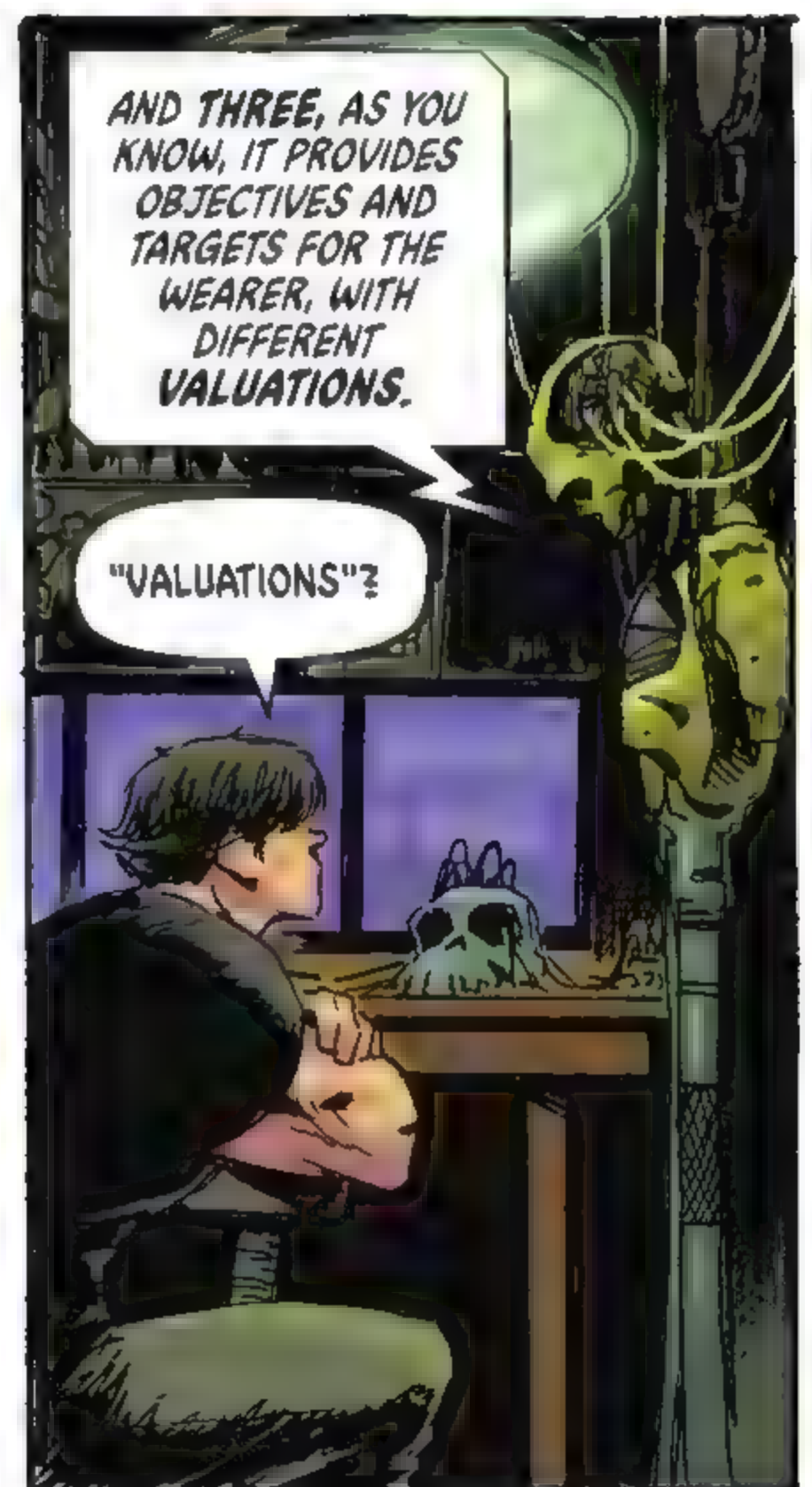


\*SIGH\* YO, AL.  
HOW DO THE PARTY ANIMALS'  
APE SKULLS WORK?



WELL, BRUCE, THE MASK HAS THREE  
FUNCTIONS. *ONE*, IT COMPLETELY  
OBFUSCATES THE WEARER'S IDENTITY  
FROM ALL GLOBAL OR LOCAL  
DECIPHERING MEANS.

*TWO*, IT CREATES  
A WALLET FOR THE  
WEARER CONNECTED  
TO A HIGHLY PROTECTED  
PRIVATE NETWORK OF  
CRYPTOCURRENCY  
CALLED THE  
*BLACK COIN*.



AND *THREE*, AS YOU  
KNOW, IT PROVIDES  
OBJECTIVES AND  
TARGETS FOR THE  
WEARER, WITH  
DIFFERENT  
VALUATIONS.

"VALUATIONS"?





ARSON, ROBBERY,  
MURDER... EACH HAS A  
DIFFERENT VALUE IN BLACK  
COIN. BUT WE'RE TALKING  
TENS AND HUNDREDS OF  
THOUSANDS. MEMBERS  
CAN GET QUITE WEALTHY  
QUITE FAST.

HOW WOULD  
SOMEONE DISRUPT IT?  
THIS NETWORK.



THE  
NETWORK IS FAR  
TOO EXPANSIVE  
FOR ANYONE TO  
BRING DOWN.



YOU COULD TAKE OUT A  
LOCAL SERVER, BUT THE  
NETWORK IS SATELLITE  
BASED. THERE ARE  
DEPOSITS OF THESE  
MASKS ALL OVER  
THE WORLD.



HUNDREDS.  
MAYBE THOUSANDS  
OF MEMBERS.

THERE  
HAS TO BE SOME  
WAY.

THERE  
IS NOT.

BUT SEE,  
YOU DON'T  
ACTUALLY KNOW  
EVERYTHING,  
AL. EDDIE?



JUST DESTROY  
THE MASK AND  
FORGET IT.

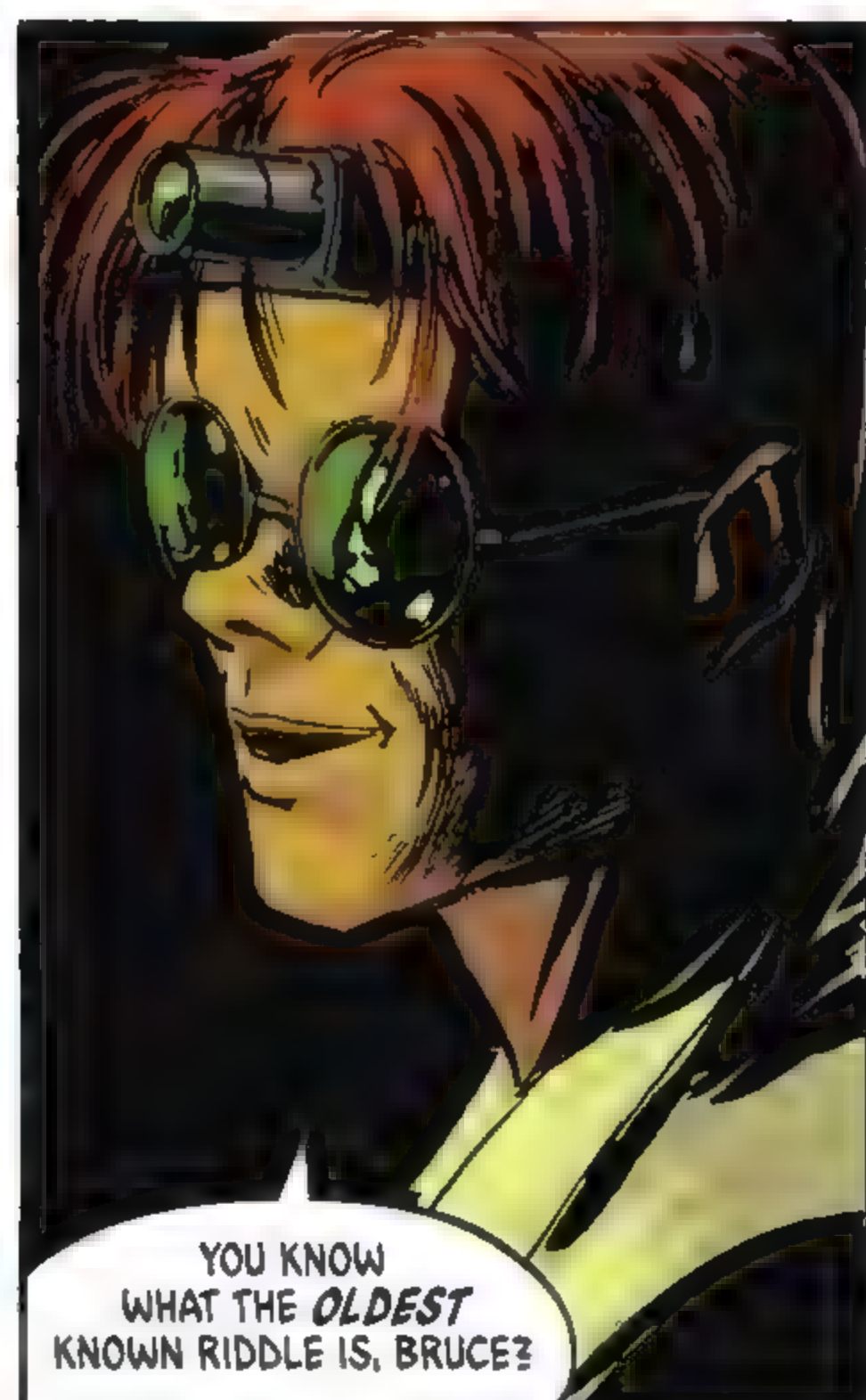
COME  
ON--

HE DOESN'T  
WANT TO HELP  
YOU, BRUCE,  
EVEN IF HE  
COULD.



I MAY NOT KNOW  
EVERYTHING, BUT  
I KNOW THAT  
MUCH.

WHY, I'M JUST  
ASKING QUESTIONS.



YOU KNOW  
WHAT THE **OLDEST**  
KNOWN RIDDLE IS, BRUCE?









WELCOME, WELCOME!

I APPRECIATE YOU AGREEING TO MEET ME.



YOU'RE NOT GETTING MY **ENDORSEMENT**, HILL. IF THAT'S WHY YOU INVITED ME HERE, YOU CAN FORGET IT. JIM AND I--

WHOA, WHOA! SLOW DOWN, COMMISSIONER. I'M NOT TRYING TO STEAL YOU AWAY FROM OLD JIMMY. I JUST WANTED TO THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO...



...AND TO INTRODUCE YOU TO A FRIEND OF MINE.

DR. BENJAMIN, PERMISSION TO COME ABOARD? IS HE AVAILABLE?



HE'S IN THE BODY ROOM.



WOW. COOL SHADES.



HILL, I CAME BECAUSE YOU SAID YOU COULD HELP US.

I CAN. THROUGH HIM...



...HARVEY BULLOCK, MEET **MR. ROMAN SIONIS**.

COMMISSIONER! WELCOME ABOARD! AND THIS IS--

BIBBO BIBOWSKI, FORMER CHAMP. SOUTHPAW FROM SUICIDE SLUM. I WAS--AM--A FAN.

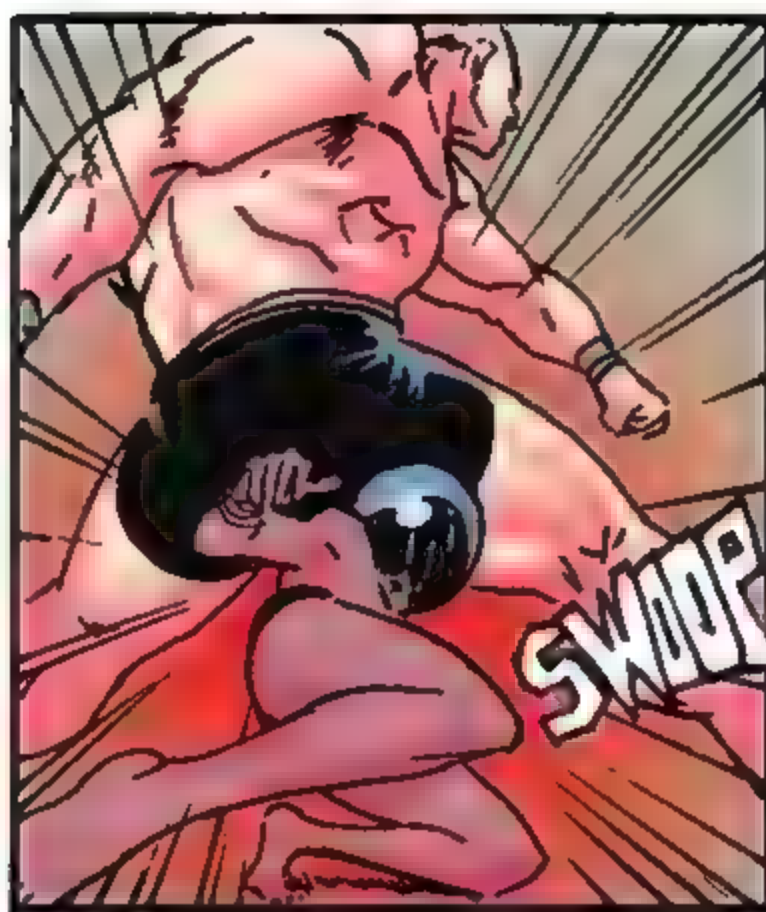




EVEN BETTER! NOW PLEASE, MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME!



THANKS. SO... WHAT'S WITH THE MASK?



OH, IT'S JUST FOR ANONYMITY, COMMISSIONER.

I HAVE A LOT OF ENEMIES IN MY LINE OF WORK.

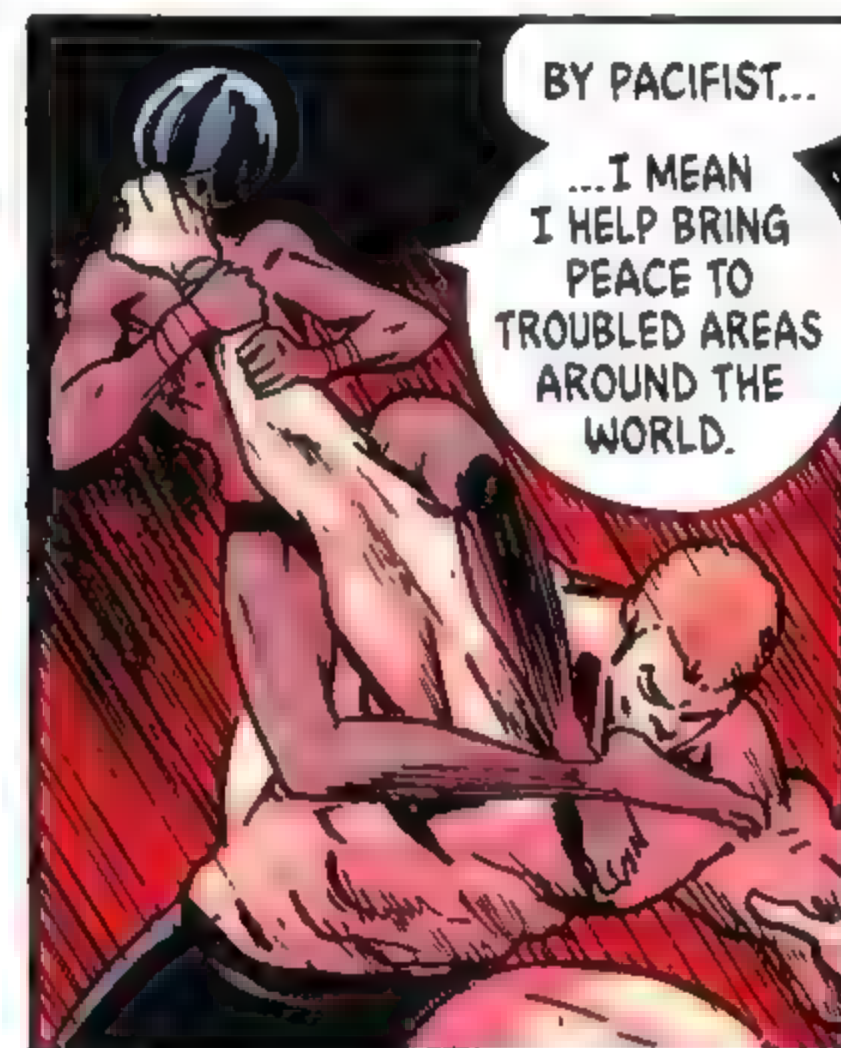


AND WHAT LINE IS THAT?

I'M A PROFESSIONAL PACIFIST.

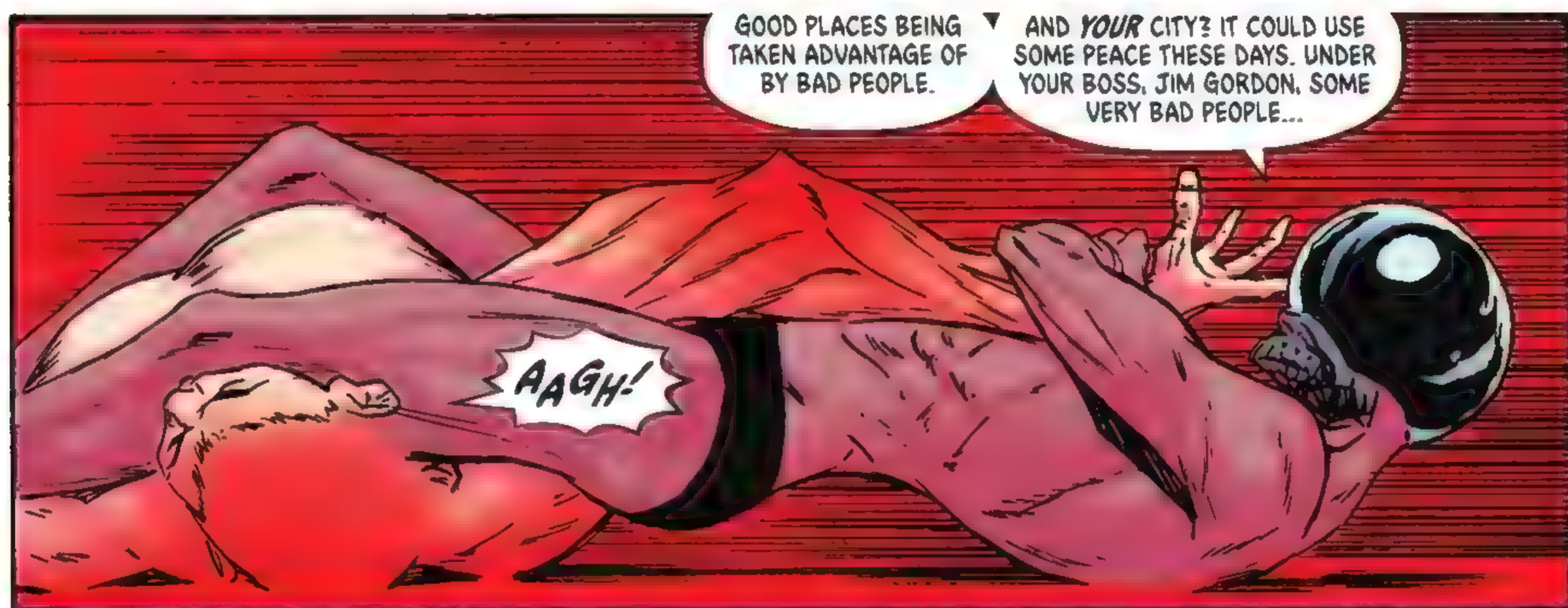


'COURSE. I MEAN, LOOK AT YOU.



BY PACIFIST...

...I MEAN I HELP BRING PEACE TO TROUBLED AREAS AROUND THE WORLD.



GOOD PLACES BEING TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF BY BAD PEOPLE.

AND YOUR CITY? IT COULD USE SOME PEACE THESE DAYS. UNDER YOUR BOSS, JIM GORDON, SOME VERY BAD PEOPLE...



...THEY'RE TEARING GOTHAM APART.



LOOK, I'M NOT GOING TO STAND HERE AND LISTEN TO YOU BADMOUTH JIMMY.

NEVER. JIM GORDON IS A GOOD MAN. WE ALL AGREE. AND YOU TWO WERE CORPS TOGETHER, I GET IT. THAT'S A REAL BOND.

\*HUFF HUFF\*





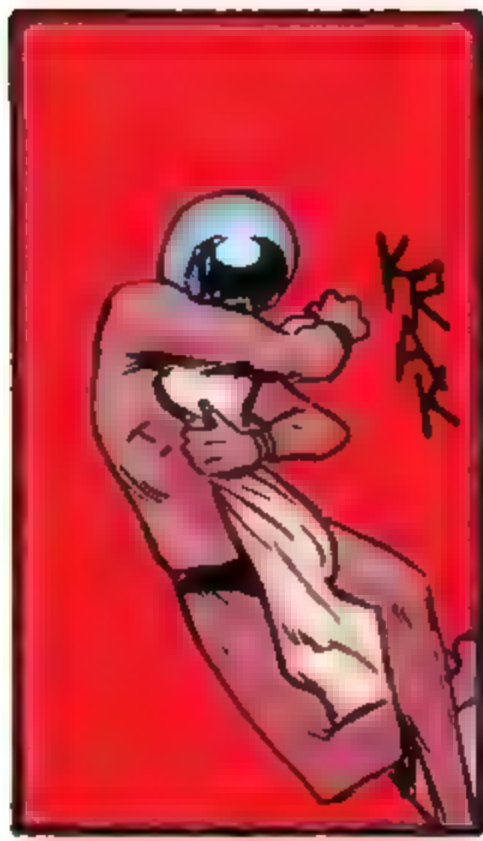
BUT THE FACT IS, THE PARTY ANIMALS ARE #&\$%& DEGENERATES. YOUNG, GODLESS, BELIEVING IN NOTHING.



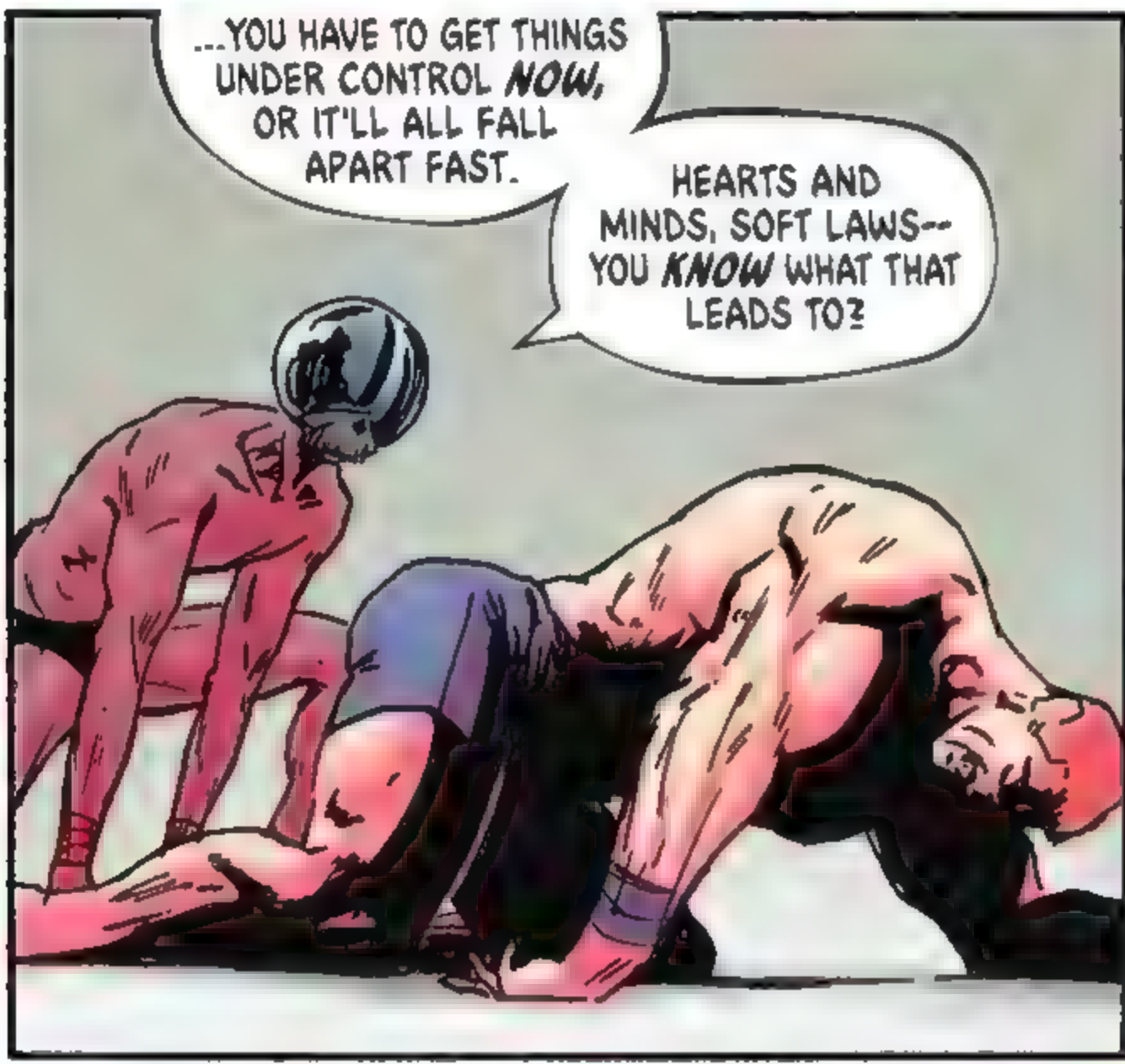
THEY'RE FILTH.



NO ARGUMENT HERE.



AND THEY'RE GROWING IN NUMBER. BETWEEN THEM AND THIS BATMAN...



...YOU HAVE TO GET THINGS UNDER CONTROL NOW, OR IT'LL ALL FALL APART FAST.

HEARTS AND MINDS, SOFT LAWS-- YOU KNOW WHAT THAT LEADS TO?



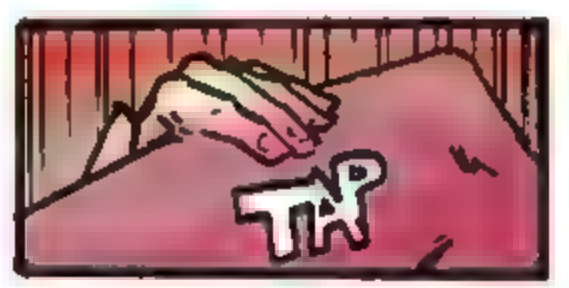
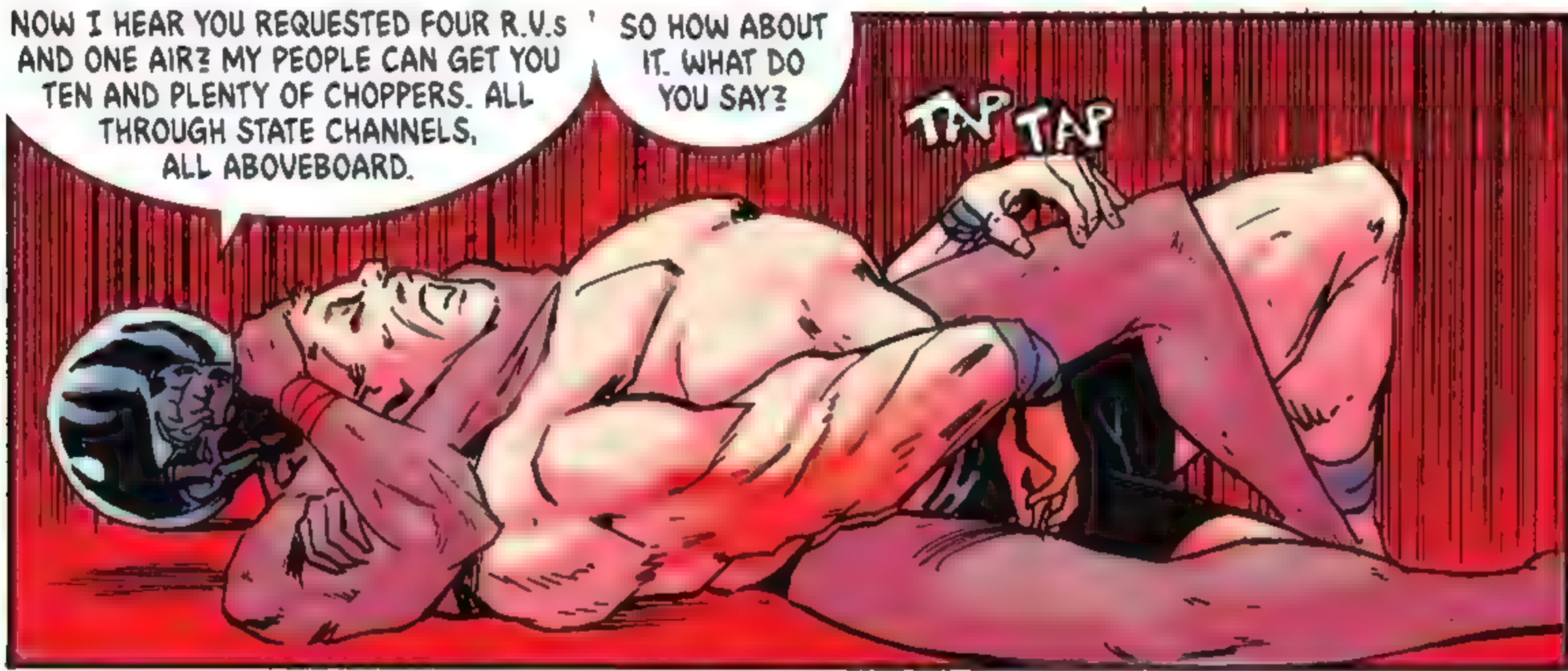
WAR.



BINGO. I'VE SEEN IT HAPPEN IN CITIES ALL OVER THE WORLD. HELL, I GREW UP IN ONE.

NOW I HEAR YOU REQUESTED FOUR R.V.s AND ONE AIR? MY PEOPLE CAN GET YOU TEN AND PLENTY OF CHOPPERS. ALL THROUGH STATE CHANNELS, ALL ABOVEBOARD.

SO HOW ABOUT IT. WHAT DO YOU SAY?



ALL RIGHT, MAN! HE'S HAD ENOUGH! @#%&!



IS HE...



NO! DON'T WORRY ABOUT HIM, COMMISSIONER. HE'LL BE FINE.

NOW, COME. LET'S TALK ABOUT PEACE.



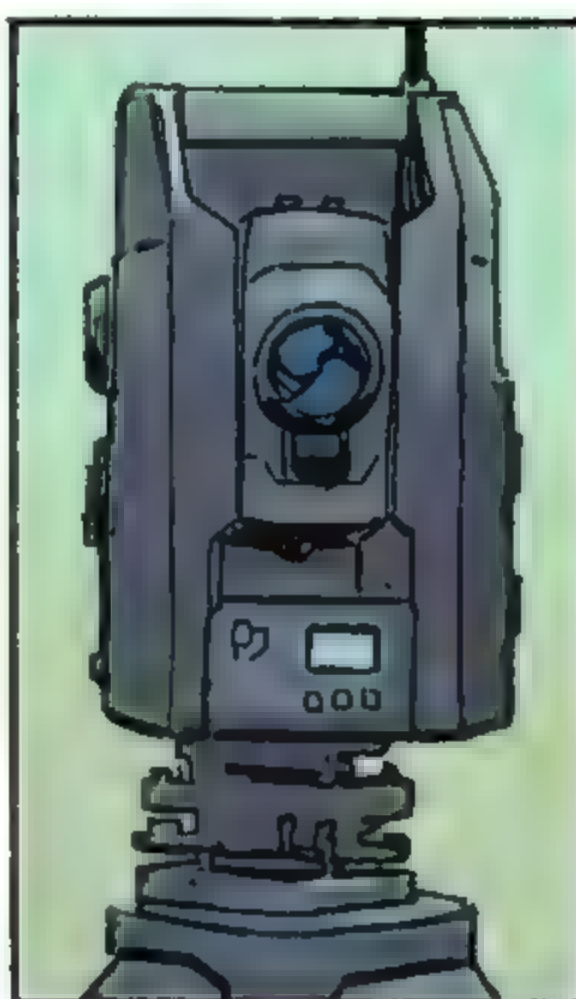
Your eyes open yet, Bruce?  
You starting to see  
the pieces?

They call them "Arks,"  
these black sites.



Secret, unregulated  
prisons run in conjunction  
with other governments  
around the world.

Ark A was the first, the prototype  
in Santa Prisca. Ark B is in Russia.  
Ark C is China.



THE  
HELL...



Wherever you are, I hope it's  
finally coming into focus.



Ark M, the biggest yet,  
is planned for Gotham.

Look at it,  
Bruce.

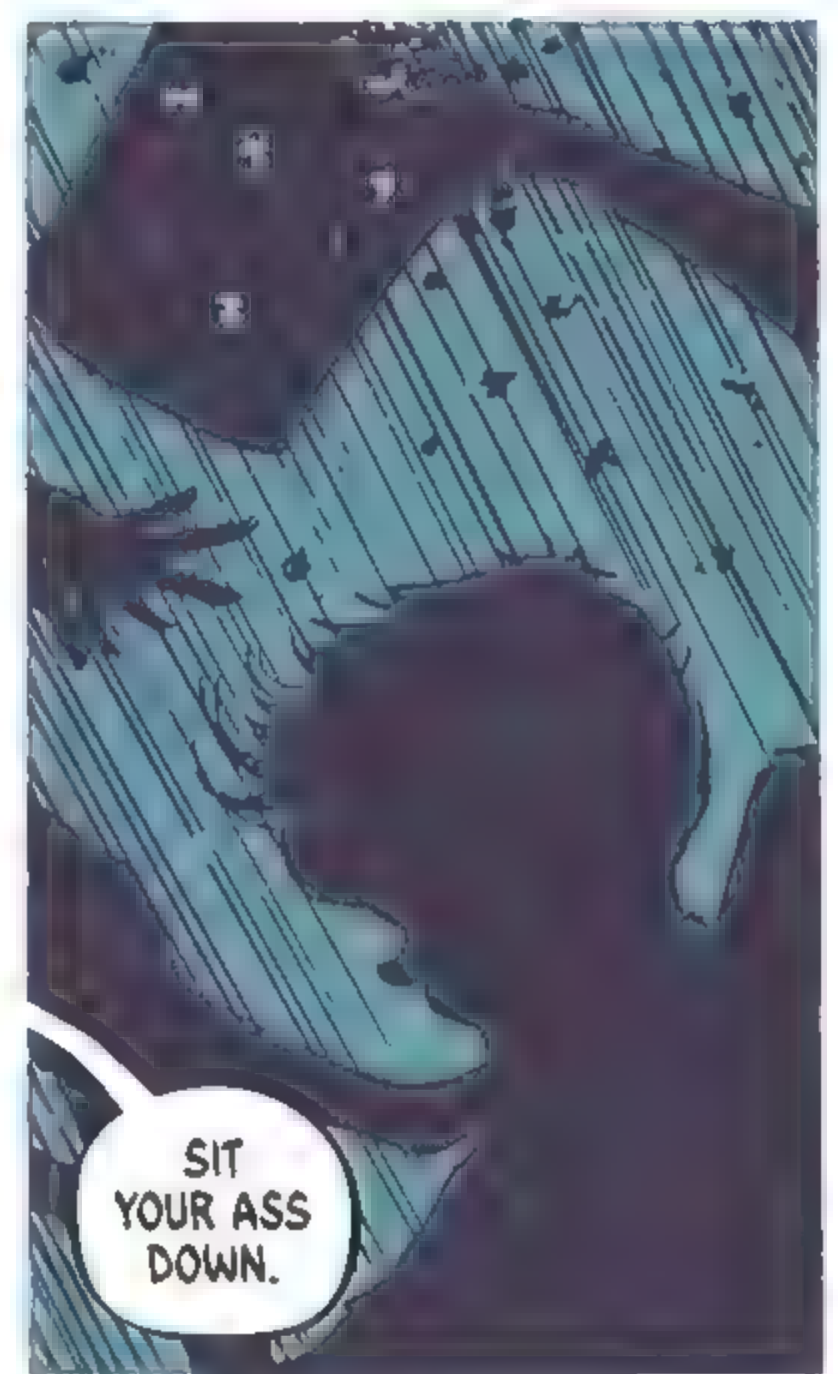


Look at what  
you're up  
against.

And all you  
could lose...











MORNING, MOM.



BRUCE?!  
YOU SCARED  
ME.

WHAT IS IT,  
HONEY? WHAT'S ON  
YOUR MIND?

NOTHING.  
I WAS JUST IN THE  
NEIGHBORHOOD AND  
FIGURED...



FIGURED YOU'D  
DROP BY AND MAKE  
**SOUP** AT EIGHT IN  
THE MORNING?



DON'T GET ME  
WRONG, NOTHING  
MAKES ME HAPPIER  
THAN FINDING YOU IN  
THIS KITCHEN. BUT I  
KNOW YOU. I KNOW  
THAT FACE. WHAT  
IS IT?



I JUST...  
I WAS THINKING  
MAYBE WITH ALL THE CHAOS  
IN THE CITY LATELY, MAYBE YOU  
COULD KIND OF, I DON'T  
KNOW... **LIE LOW?**



THE CHAOS  
IS EXACTLY WHY  
I **CAN'T** LIE LOW,  
BRUCE. IN  
FACT...

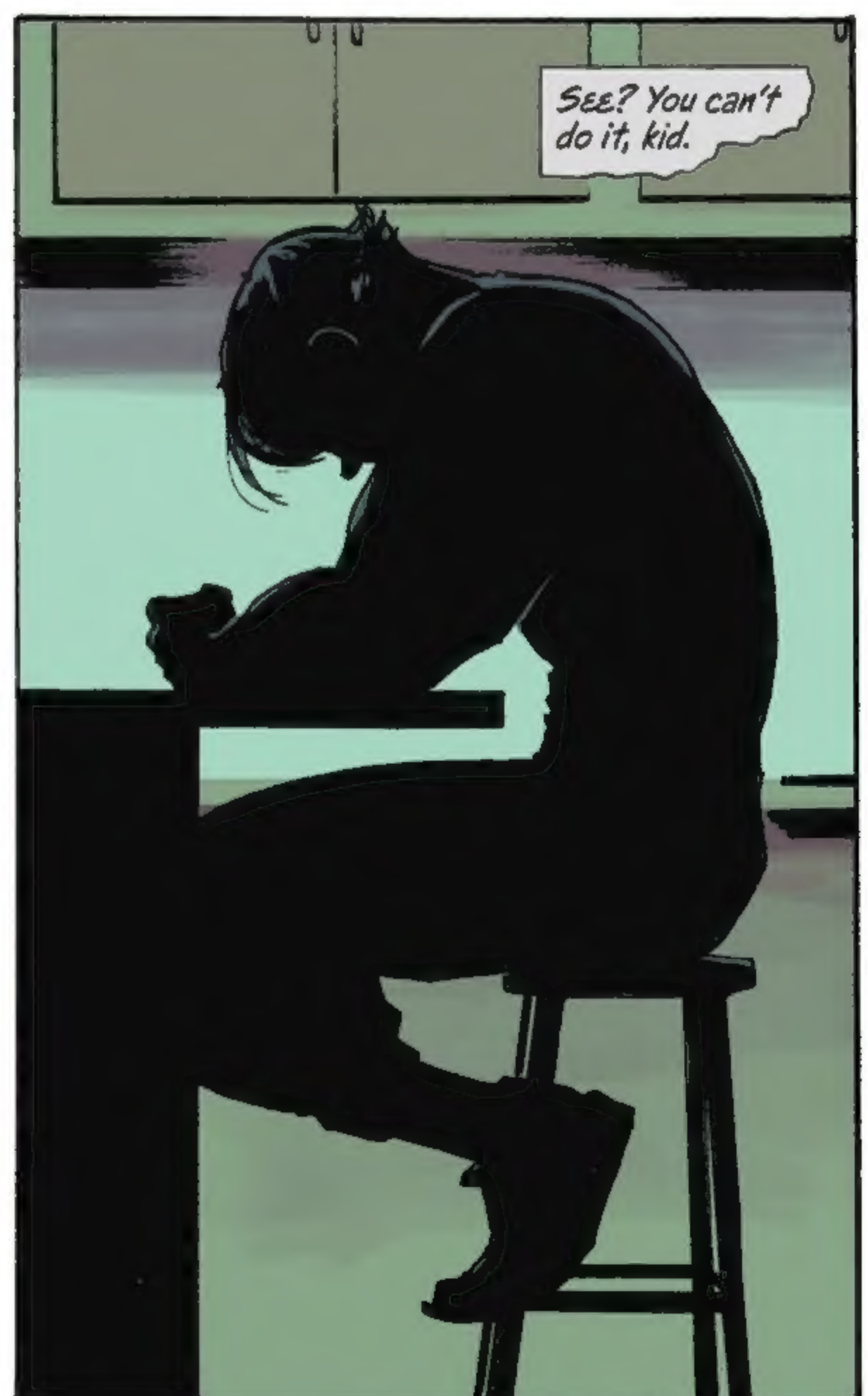


...I'M STEPPING  
IN AS JIM'S **DEPUTY  
MAYOR**. I'M ON MY WAY  
TO THE OFFICIAL PRESS  
EVENT RIGHT NOW.



DEPUTY MAYOR?!  
MOM, **WHY** WOULD  
YOU DO THAT? THE PARTY  
ANIMALS KEEP TARGETING  
OFFICIALS. STEPPING UP  
ATTACKS. YOU'RE PUTTING  
A **BULLSEYE** ON  
YOURSELF.













...And that's accept it.



Look around, past your fists, at all the people who'll get hurt. Look up past the towers, the satellites, at the forces at work. A whole sky tilted against you. And then look down past your feet, at how far you could fall...



--PARTY ANIMALS TERRORIZE IN BROAD--



...and do the only good thing you can.



--MAYOR GORDON, STILL HOSPITALIZED, TELLS PEOPLE TO RESIST FEAR--



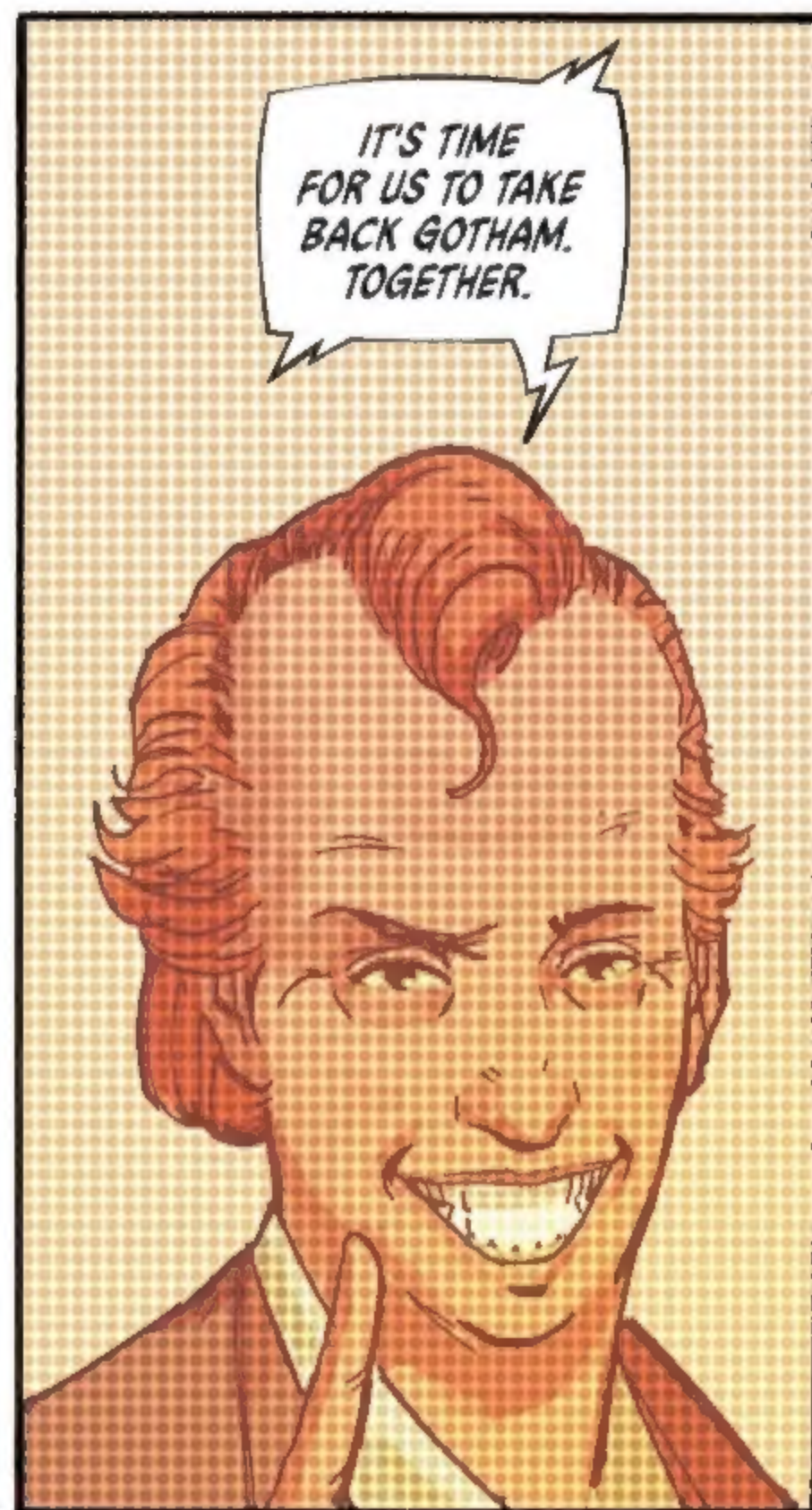
GORDON'S VISION HAS FAILED YOU.

FAILED THIS CITY.



I'M PROUD TO HAVE THE ENDORSEMENT OF COMMISSIONER BULLOCK AND THE G.C.P.D.

CLAP CLAP CLAP



IT'S TIME FOR US TO TAKE BACK GOTHAM TOGETHER.



TOMORROW MARKS THE ANNIVERSARY OF ONE OF THE MOST VIOLENT DAYS IN CITY HISTORY: THE GOTHAM ZOO SHOOTING.

I PROPOSE THAT THIS YEAR, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE TRAGEDY, WE DO NOT TURN ON THE MEMORIAL LIGHT. IT WOULD BE A MOCKERY TO SEE IT BRIGHTEN THE SKY WITH BLOOD RUNNING IN OUR STREETS!



AND AMIDST ALL THIS, PEOPLE ARE WONDERING: WHERE IS THE BATMAN?

HOW WILL HE RESPOND?





...THAT'S RIGHT. TWO HUNDRED MILLION TO STAND DOWN FOR ONE WEEK AND I'LL MAKE SURE WE GO A LITTLE BIT EASIER ON OLD GOTHAM.

NOW, I CAN'T SEE YOU, BUDDY, BUT I HOPE YOU'RE SMILING JUST THINKING ABOUT IT.



THINKING ABOUT ALL OF THE GOOD BATMAN COULD DO WITH THAT KIND OF MONEY.



THE CARS. THE WEAPONS. THE TECH.



HE'LL BE SOMETHING LARGER THAN LIFE. SOMETHING EPIC. BATMAN WILL--



ENOUGH.



I'LL TAKE THE DEAL.

TO BE CONTINUED...

